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ABSTRACT

Year-round education (YRE) has been brought increasingly to the forefront of the debate over educational reform. Although the results of year-round school studies are mixed, three specific elements are evident in successful programs--reduced curriculum review, increased instructional time, and improved student outcomes. This report introduces the concept of year-round education. It provides an overview and brief history of YRE and discusses national attitudes toward it. Subsequent sections describe different scheduling plans and implementation strategies. Specific outcomes realized by a number of school districts are highlighted, which include decreased dropout rates, improved student achievement scores, expanded extracurricular activities, reduced discipline problems, increased teacher/student employment opportunities, improved parent satisfaction, increased re-entry opportunities for at-risk students, and reduced taxpayer burdens. The final section offers answers to the most commonly asked questions regarding YRE. Three figures are included. Appendices describe YRE calendars and the programs of six YRE schools in Arizona. (LMI)

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Year Round Education:

Breaking the Bonds of Tradition

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Year Round Education:

Breaking the Bonds of Tradition

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Year Round Education:
Breaking the Bonds of Tradition

Executive Summary

Year round education (YRE) has been brought increasingly to the forefront of the debate on education reform. This is due, in part, to the traditional nine month agrarian calendar having outlived its usefulness and to the growing list of studies detailing the positive impacts of YRE.

While some may interpret YRE to imply that students attend school all year long, this is not the case. Indeed, students attend school the same number of days as they would on a traditional calendar; the days are simply reconfigured into a variety of different schedules. Many schools and districts adopting a year round calendar, however, do make use of the vacation breaks—or intersessions—to offer remedial, enrichment, or accelerated classes.

Although the results of year round school studies are mixed, three specific elements appear to be evident in *successful* programs.

Reduced Curriculum Review—Given the shorter summer break, the traditional six week period of curriculum review in September is reduced to approximately one week, thereby allowing the remaining five weeks to be used for the introduction of new material. Consequently, students are receiving 25 days of instruction previously reserved for review—all at no additional cost to the district. However, teachers must be directed to revamp the delivery and pace of instruction in order to best utilize these five weeks.

Increased Instructional Time—Intersessions provide excellent opportunities for students to participate in remediation, enrichment, and/or acceleration activities. Students requiring remediation do not have to experience nine months of failure before participating in the current intervention known as "summer school." Enrichment activities may be recreational in nature, while acceleration classes offer opportunities for students to advance in their program of study. However, in order to provide such programs, districts must compensate for the additional expense of teachers' salaries. Hence, many schools charge a "tuition" or fee to participating students, most frequently for enrichment and acceleration activities.

Improved Student Outcomes—Studies of schools on year round calendars have noted such benefits as: 1) improved test scores; 2) improved dropout rates; 3) increased graduation rates; 4) lowered absenteeism; 5) reduced acts of vandalism; 6) decreased retention rates; and 7) improved student self-esteem—all worthy outcomes of the educational process.

This report introduced the concept of year round education, identifies strategies that promote and maintain stakeholder buy-in to YRE, offers counsel to stakeholders serving on a school/district YRE committee, profiles specific research outcomes of YRE, poses commonly asked questions regarding YRE, and offers insight into the implications for policymakers. In addition, a description of many year round calendars is profiled, along with a sampling of schools/districts in Arizona that have made—or are making—the transition to a year round calendar.

Although research results are mixed, the overall benefits associated with YRE make it worth the additional efforts required to implement a successful program. For example, declining dropout rates; reduced absenteeism, vandalism, and discipline problems; and intersessions designed to engage students in a continuous learning environment have the potential to counteract the rising demand for social services and jails. We must strive to sever the bonds of tradition that bind us to an agrarian calendar and consider the potential benefits of this important component of education reform—a year round calendar.

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The authors of this report wish to express their appreciation to individuals in each of the schools/districts who provided information for this report. Their enthusiasm for their year round calendars was evident, and they are to be congratulated for their prioneering efforts.

Year Round Education:
Breaking the Bonds of Tradition

INTRODUCTION

Many Americans are becoming increasingly vocal regarding their dissatisfaction with the public education system. Declining test scores and unsatisfactory comparisons with other industrialized nations' academic achievements have served as an impetus for business leaders, educators, parents, and community members to call for educational reform. Consequently, year round education (YRE) is being touted as one means of rectifying the academic challenges facing America's schools today.

Proponents of YRE believe that the traditional nine month agrarian calendar has outlived its usefulness. The September through May calendar year was designed to allow students three months off in the summer to work in the fields, not promote sound learning practices. As a result, YRE advocates are calling for a redesigning of the traditional school calendar toward a goal of improving instruction opportunities that promote learning.

A growing body of research lends support to those considering, or having already implemented, a year round calendar. An early study, *Learning, Retention, and Forgetting* (Thomas & Pelavin, 1978) examined various school calendars to determine their effect on student learning. The study concluded that twelve weeks away from formal instruction had a negative effect on the majority of children, especially those classified as "educationally disadvantaged." Two prominent research findings were: 1) learning and the retention of such information is enhanced when it is provided across a twelve month calendar; and 2) a child does not maintain the same rate of learning during the summer away from formal instruction as would be characteristic of in-school learning.

More recent research by Gitlin (1988) and Parrish (1989) found that by shortening the time spent away from formal learning in the summer, the year round calendar reduced the time for getting students up to speed in the fall. This is particularly noteworthy in reference to slower learners. While both high and low achievers may make very similar educational gains during the course of a school year, they fail to maintain these levels of achievement over the traditional summer away from instruction. As a result, one group requires a longer time for review at the beginning of the school year, which leaves even less time for learning new material.

Some may argue that such research findings only support the need for implementing a year round calendar for low achieving students. However, the basic premise of adopting a year round calendar is that all students learn best, and retain information longer, when a more continuous educational program is offered. School districts which have adopted year round calendars, such as in Houston, Texas, and Oxnard, California, testify to having experienced a steady increase in student achievement for *all* students. There are other schools and districts, however, that have not realized these same successes.

In light of the mixed reviews on YRE, stakeholders in many schools and districts throughout the nation are seeking to equip themselves with the knowledge by which they, too, can ascertain the benefits and barriers to implementing a year round calendar. This report is designed to orient

policymakers, administrators, educators, parents, community members, and students to the concept of YRE. It provides an overview of year round education, what national leaders are saying, a brief history of year round education, how YRE works, specific outcomes realized by a number of school districts, and poses answers to the most commonly asked questions regarding YRE.

Definitions

Year round education can best be described as a reorganization of the school calendar into instructional blocks and vacations distributed across the calendar year so that learning is continuous throughout the year. It *does not mean* that students go to school every day of a 12 month calendar. It *does mean* that by taking the same number of instructional days and spreading them throughout the entire year, two major instructional improvements can occur. First, the traditional six week review of the previous year's curriculum in the fall is reduced to approximately one week since instruction is interrupted during the summer, on average, only 15-20 days (depending on the plan selected and if intersessions are offered during the summer months). Second, many YRE calendars provide the option of an additional 30 to 40 days of instruction—during intersessions—by offering students and teachers the choice of participating in one, two, or three week remedial and/or enrichment activities. It is important to note, however, that intersessions do require additional funding, although a number of schools have found creative financing schemes, as discussed later.

Although commonly confused with YRE, an *extended school year* (ESY) refers to the addition of instructional days beyond the traditional length of the school year (e.g., 180 days), not a rearrangement of existing days as in YRE. Many advocates of ESY promote having longer school days and additional weeks of instruction to more closely resemble those of other industrialized nations; however, two major concerns exist. First, the costs associated with such proposals in Arizona is virtually prohibitive. For example, in Arizona, such costs are estimated to be approximately $9 million for each additional day (Jordan, 1994). Second, those opposed to ESY believe "more of the same" is not in the best interests of students, nor will it improve America's competitiveness in a global economy.

National Views and History

Many national leaders are promoting YRE as one reform component designed to improve the educational experience of students. The National Governors' Association has declared that "It makes no sense to keep closed half a year the school buildings in which America has invested a quarter of a trillion dollars while we are under-educated and overcrowded" (Ballinger, as cited in Phi Delta Kappa [PDK], 1990, p. 17). Statements by Denis Doyle and Chester Finn (1985), strong advocates of school reform, lend support to Ballinger's remark when they say, "At a time when the nation is passionately interested in boosting student achievement, providing better care for the children of working parents, and enhancing the appeal of the teaching profession, it makes no sense to allow our schools to stand idle" (p. 31).

Don Glines (1987), an educational consultant for the California Department of Education, believes that YRE better serves the student and society facing the challenges of the next century: "YRE helps people individually, and society in general, by providing calendar, curriculum, and family options which more closely fit the changing lifestyles, work patterns, and community involvements for

large segments of the population. Opportunities for continuous lifelong learning are becoming essential new age characteristics as the world edges into the 21st Century" (p. 14). However, despite the national call for overhauling the educational system as we know it today, the American public remains generally unconvinced that there is any need to change from the traditional agrarian nine month school calendar, which was originally organized around a predominantly agricultural-based economy (Ballinger, 1988).

Year round education is *not* a recent phenomenon in the United States or in other countries. During the 19th century, a number of school districts in America operated on a 12 month calendar. Glines (1987) notes that early 20th century records indicate that a number of communities employed year round programs, including Bluffton, Indiana (1904); Newark, New Jersey (1912); Minot, North Dakota (1917); Omaha, Nebraska (1925); Nashville, Tennessee (1926); and Aliquippa, Pennsylvania (1928). Each program was instituted to meet specific community needs. For example, Bluffton approved YRE to improve curriculum and learning, and to provide families and students with options; Newark initiated its program to help immigrants learn English and to enable students to progress more quickly through the educational system. Minot saw a need to provide remedial assistance to those students requiring it, while Omaha desired to offer continuous vocational education training. Nashville implemented YRE to improve the quality of its educational process, and Aliquippa required additional space.

While these programs—for a variety of reasons—did not survive the depression of the 1930s, the motives for doing so certainly have. For example, during the early 1970s, a number of schools experiencing over-crowding began to adopt year round schedules as a means of combating the refusal of taxpayers to approve bond levies needed to build new facilities (*Newsweek*, as cited in PDK, 1990, p. 15). Indeed, the last decade of the 20th century also finds taxpayers equally unprepared to pump additional resources into the educational system unless the public is convinced that by doing so, it will yield positive results. Consequently, many schools are examining a variety of reform efforts in order to regain the confidence of their community—with YRE being one aspect of reform activity frequently being investigated. These efforts frequently comprise a renewed focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment; meeting the needs of diverse groups of students (e.g., learning disabled, gifted, English as a Second Language, vocational); and over-crowding—some of the very reasons schools in the past turned to the year round concept.

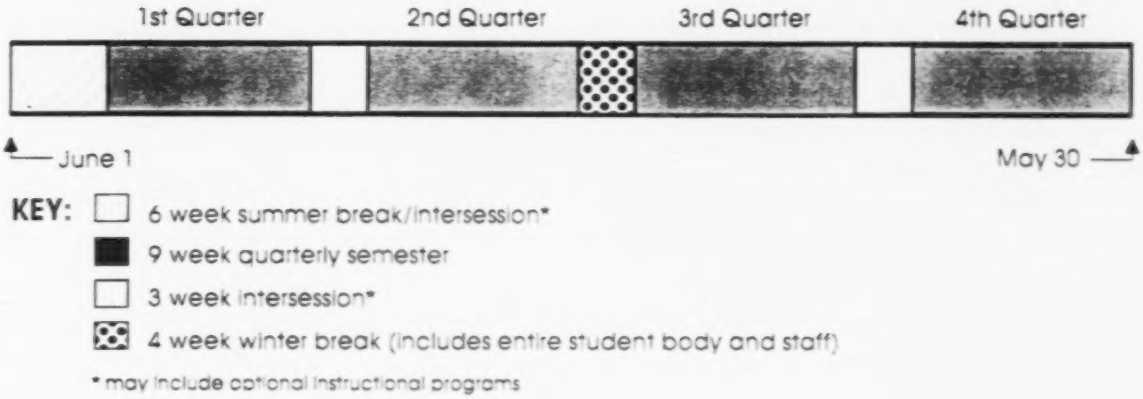
Single Track & Multi-Track Models

Two general models are employed as part of YRE: *single track*, where all students in a school attend classes at the same time, and *multi-track*, where students have staggered attendance schedules. Schools not impacted with excessive numbers of students—but still desiring to move away from the agrarian, nine-month calendar—generally implement a single track YRE calendar. Districts faced with overcrowding conditions and inadequate facilities generally choose a multi-track system.

Single Track—One popular single track YRE calendar, the 45 day-15 day plan, is divided into four nine-week terms which are separated by three-week vacations or intersessions, thereby providing up to 180 days of instruction (see Figure 1). Each semester

consists of two 45-15 day quarters. Two semesters comprise a full year of grading, with each of the four nine-week terms providing a flexible instructional unit. Optional *intersessions* occurring between quarters are designed to meet the needs of participating students by providing remedial and enrichment activities. Although the 45-15 plan implies that students receive 45 days of instruction followed by a 15 day intersession, it is not usually possible to consistently implement the plan as stated. For example,

Figure 1. Sample of a 45-15 Single Track Plan



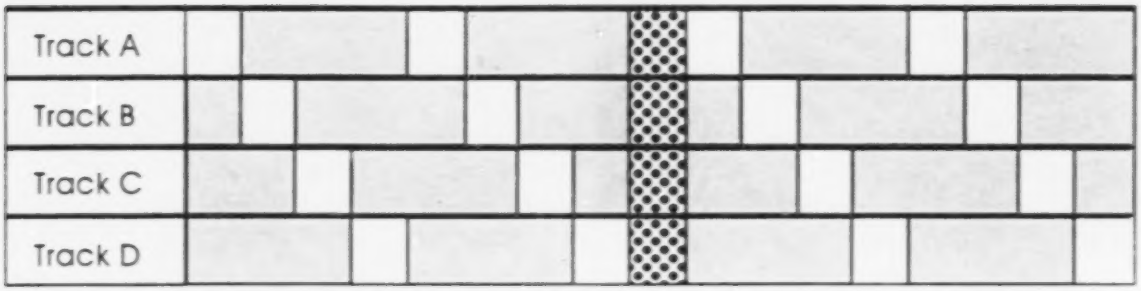
legal and local holidays may extend the actual length of the plan to a 47-13 day schedule, with an additional four weeks in the year that are allocated to winter holidays; spring vacation; and national, state, or local holidays.

Multi-track—When confronted with over-crowding, many districts choose to implement YRE rather than increase their bond indebtedness by constructing new facilities. Depending on the plan chosen, a school site can increase its enrollment up to 50 percent beyond its stated capacity.

For example, by implementing a 45-15 multi-track plan, students are divided into two or four groups, (depending on enrollment) and assigned to an "A," "B," "C," or "D" track. Students from the A, B, and C tracks attend classes while those on track D are on vacation (i.e., intersession). When group D returns, group A begins vacation. Students rotate intersession periods every three weeks, thereby creating an additional 25 percent capacity in the school (some calendars provide a 50 percent capacity) Although teachers generally follow the same track as their students, they can choose to extend their contracts by teaching when their students go on vacation.

The instructional periods, like the 45-15 single track plan, consist of two semesters each with two 45-15 quarters per semester. Grading occurs after each quarter (nine-week period) with intersessions used for remedial or enrichment activities. Intersessions continue to remain a significant program option for schools on a multi-track calendar desiring to meet the academic needs of its students; however, these programs are generally conducted off-campus in community-owned buildings, parks, or recreational areas.

Figure 2. Sample of a 45-15 Multi-Track Plan



KEY: 3 week intersession*
9 week quarterly semester
4 week winter break (includes entire student body and staff)
* may include off-site instructional programs

While the single and multi-track 45-15 plans are very popular, it must be noted that a variety of other plans exist. For example, the 60-20 and 90-30 plans are similar to the 45-15 plan except that students attend school for 60 and 90 days respectively, with 20 or 30 day intersessions—depending on the plan. Another example is the quinmester plan, which consists of five 9-week quinmesters (terms) with students selecting or being assigned four of the five quins. (See Appendix A for a description of all YRE calendars.)

PROMOTING AND MAINTAINING STAKEHOLDER BUY-IN

Implementation Strategies

Clearly, no year round calendar—single or multi-track—will be successful if administrators, educators, parents, and students do not buy into the concept. Since stakeholder buy-in to the concept of YRE is critical in determining the success of the programs, it is important for stakeholders to determine which of the plans best meets their needs. In order for this to occur, school and district organizers must be prepared to take the message of YRE to their constituents—namely, the parents, students, and community at large. Promoting the message of YRE involves a media blitz in local papers; town hall meetings where interested parties can discuss the benefits and barriers; and many small group meetings focused on educating the entire community. These strategies have been used effectively in schools and districts throughout Arizona. Each district has been engaged in single track YRE for two and three years respectively; however, each attributes the acceptance of their programs to the months of educating community members *prior* to implementation.

In addition to information distribution and communication, districts and schools may want to consider offering parents and educators a choice in calendars. It can result in reduced hostilities between those who desire YRE and those who do not, and it provides parents the option of choosing

between one long vacation period for their children rather than several shorter vacations throughout the year. All of the plans work; one is not better than another. However, the following three strategies have emerged as the most popular (Glines, 1987).

The first strategy promoting stakeholder buy-in is the school-within-a-school plan. School sites offer both the traditional nine month calendar along with a single track year round calendar within the same building. Some schools refer to the choice between the two plans as the single vacation plan and the multiple vacation plan. Two of the distinct advantages in offering parents a choice results in reduced hostilities between those who desire YRE and those who do not, and the option for parents to choose between one long vacation period for their children rather than several shorter vacations throughout the year. For example, this strategy was successfully employed by the Crane Elementary School District in Yuma, Arizona, in 1992-93 to counter the opposition to a district-wide plan to switch to an entirely year round calendar. Approximately 40 per cent of the students chose the 45-15 plan, while the remaining students stayed on the traditional nine month calendar. After experimenting with this plan for one year, support for YRE was such that all the schools in the district adopted a 45-15 calendar in 1993-94.

The second plan involves pairing two geographically close schools; one school remains on the nine month calendar while the second school adopts the year round calendar. This strategy was successful in the Yuma Elementary School District, Yuma, Arizona, in 1991-92. When Palmcroft Elementary decided to switch to a single track 45-15 calendar, students not wishing to be on the year round calendar were permitted to attend a neighboring school. Again, this plan offers parents a choice depending on their needs.

The third plan is very similar to the second in that a cluster of neighborhood schools services a community by having one school site offer a continuous learning program (i.e., YRE) while the remaining schools offer a September-May calendar.

While the importance of stakeholder buy-in prior to implementing a YRE calendar cannot be overemphasized, *maintaining* such support will ensure the longevity of the concept. Schools and districts that are not proactive in nurturing and building on the original support for the new calendar could be in danger of losing it at a later date. Whether it is the turnover of governing board members, the hiring of a new superintendent or principal, or the arrival of new families or faculty to the school—each represents a possible scenario that has the potential for eroding what was once a popular concept. Hence, the following strategies are provided as means of maintaining stakeholder buy-in.

First, the *goals of a year round calendar* must be clearly stated, clearly understood, and agreed upon by the majority of stakeholder groups. Second, *a means of evaluating the goals* must be determined. Collecting and analyzing data for such worthy goals as decreasing dropout rates, increasing graduation rates, improving attendance, and producing gains in student achievement can be easily compiled and relayed to a variety of stakeholder groups; however, too often the effect of year round schooling are evaluated after one or two years when the problems of starting up a new program and making the necessary adjustment may be affecting student achievement (Merino, 1983, as cited in PDK, 1990, p. 148). Generally, it is not until four years of institutionalizing a year round calendar that the benefits of such a

calendar are apparent. Third, it is important to maintain a YRE committee whose responsibilities will include the *on-going education of new members* to the school and/or district community (e.g., governing board members, district and school site administrators, faculty, parents, and students).

Critically Reviewing the Research/Literature

When investigating the notion of a year round calendar, schools and districts traditionally assemble a cross-section of members from a variety of stakeholder groups. Charged with such a mission, it is not unusual for this process to take anywhere from one to three years. Much time and energy is spent gathering articles, attending conferences, hearing testimony, visiting school sites on a year round calendar, utilizing surveys to ascertain stakeholder concerns, and holding periodic "information" nights to update their constituency.

Throughout the process, it is absolutely essential for the members of a YRE committee to critically examine the information that is being collected. Why? Because for every school or district who claims to have successfully overcome a barrier, there will be an equal number who were unable to do so. Or for every school or district who claims a benefit because of YRE—whether it is measured by gains in student achievement, increased attendance, or a higher graduation rate—there will be others who claim it did not work like that for them. So, when committee members encounter research or engage in dialogue with others about their year round calendars, the importance of posing the right questions in order to more clearly ascertain the "whys" of the success or failure cannot be overstated.

An example of one such question frequently addresses gains in student achievement. Since one of the most sought-after outcomes of a year round calendar is improved student achievement scores, it is important to note that having a school/district merely spread the same number of days over a longer period of time—while teaching exactly the same material in exactly the same way—will not necessarily produce gains in student achievement. Why? Because curriculum is currently designed to allow for a traditional six week period of review at the beginning of each academic year (to accommodate students' retention loss over the typical 12 week summer break); however, students on a year round calendar typically require only one week of review—not six weeks as allowed for in the curriculum. Consequently, teachers must be required to examine the pacing and delivery of curriculum so that the traditional review period can be reduced from six weeks to one, thereby leaving five weeks—or 25 days—for the introduction of new material. Hence, when schools and districts report no gains in student achievement, it begs the following question: Was the pacing and delivery of curriculum rearranged to allow for one week of review and five weeks of new material? If not, then the lack of gains in student achievement may be more attributable to this one factor rather than the failure of the year round calendar itself.

Additional questions of those investigating the outcomes of a year round calendar frequently focus on some of the following issues: dropout rates, extracurricular activities, absenteeism, discipline, and parent satisfaction. While these issues are examined in the following section, it must be noted that the "success stories" profiled here may not have been realized by others. Hence, it is the responsibility of the committee members to investigate not only the "whys" of successes,

but also the "why nots" of the failures. For example, a study of YRE implementation in Knox County states that a voluntary quinmester plan designed to extend the school year into the summer months failed due to a long-standing tradition that June, July, and August were vacation months (Banta, 1978, as cited in PDK, 1990, p. 117). While YRE was pronounced a failure, it was the bonds of tradition—rather than the year round calendar itself—that caused it to be unsuccessful.

A second example is that of the Los Angeles Unified School District. One of the largest districts to embrace year round education, parents and school employees voted overwhelmingly to return to a traditional calendar in the 1993-94 school year after engaging in single track calendar for two years. According to Peter Schmidt (1993), several reasons given for abandoning the single track year round calendar included the lack of air conditioning in buildings; and the additional cost of $4.2 million for building maintenance and keeping athletic programs operating during their traditional seasons. One board member suggested that by letting each of the 49 school groupings determine the fate of the year round calendar, this may have diffused the calls by state legislators to break up the large school district. Again, for a committee investigating a year round calendar, it is important to note the reasons for the failure.

SPECIFIC RESEARCH OUTCOMES REALIZED BY YRE SCHOOLS/DISTRICTS

This section summarizes key positive outcomes experienced by many YRE schools/districts. However, it is important to note that research results on YRE are mixed. For every school or district who claims a benefit because of YRE—whether it is measured by gains in student achievement, increased attendance, or a higher graduation rate—there will be others who claim it did not work like that for them. Consequently, it is very important for those investigating YRE to seek out the reasons why some have *not* realized the following benefits (see previous section).

Decreased Dropout Rates—Parry McCluer High School in Buena Vista, Virginia, began experimenting with a 12 month schedule in 1969 to provide tutoring during intersessions to slow learners and challenging courses to top students. Because students were receiving such personal attention, the school's dropout rate declined (*Newsweek*, 1987, as cited in PDK, 1990, p. 15). Jefferson County, Colorado, also experienced the near elimination of a dropout problem after implementing a multi-track year round program to relieve over-crowding (White, 1988). In addition, intersessions (involving approximately 30 percent of "vacationing" students) allowed students to make up failures or engage in enrichment activities to promote academic success and continuing enrollment.

Improved Student Achievement Scores—A second benefit realized by Parry McCluer High School in Buena Vista, Virginia, was its students collectively scoring above 98 percent on state competency tests (*Newsweek*, 1987, as cited in PDK, 1990, p. 15). Achievement scores have also improved in Los Angeles and Denver, as well as in communities like Sandy, Utah; and Oxnard, California (Ballinger, 1989, as cited in PDK, 1990, p. 18). A three year study focusing on reading achievement was conducted in Oxnard, California; it found that year round students in grades 1-3 earned significantly higher CTBS scores than their traditional-calendar counterparts (Brekke, 1984). Houston, after piloting a year round program, found that the achievement scores of

students enrolled in it are markedly higher than those of students remaining on a traditional calendar (Doyle & Finn, 1985). As a consequence, the Houston school system expanded the YRE plan to 13 additional schools.

Studies generally indicate that achievement scores do not drop when schools adopt a year round calendar (Ballinger, 1987). There are, however, a minimum of two caveats as to why some schools realize gains in achievement scores when others do not. First, merely spreading the same number of days over a longer period of time without requiring teachers to examine the efficiency of their current instructional practices and pacing of curriculum will not suffice; the traditional six week period of review in the fall may continue rather than replacing it with five weeks of new, creative material. Second, schools that offer remedial and/or enrichment opportunities during intersessions are providing their students with learning opportunities that could be reflected in gains in achievement.

Expanded Extracurricular Activities—A YRE calendar offers principals and teachers opportunities to be creative in the types of extracurricular activities offered to their student populations. For example, intersessions provide additional opportunities for practice or travel for students involved in band or drama. In Jefferson County School District, Colorado, students can choose to attend a school with a traditional or year round calendar; consequently, coaches attribute the outstanding performance of athletic teams from year round schools to drawing player talent from larger pupil populations (White, 1988). A second benefit notes that coaches are in contact with their athletes during all 12 months; weight rooms are always open, coaches are always available, and player conditioning can be a year round activity.

For students on a multi-track calendar, transportation issues must be considered. Frequently, students must provide their own transportation when they are "off cycle." Activities, including band, chorus, drama, and student council are particularly hard hit. Performing arts programs suffer and there is an increased cost to maintain rehearsals on a year-round basis. As a result, students may be pulled away from school in the year-round program, thereby resulting in a decline of school spirit.

Reduced Absenteeism, Vandalism, and/or Discipline Problems—Schools in Los Angeles and Denver, as well as Jefferson County, Colorado; Buena Vista, Virginia; . Sandy, Utah; and Oxnard, California; have students who are absent less, cause less vandalism, and experience fewer discipline problems (Ballinger, 1989, as cited in PDK, 1990, p. 18). Oxnard, California, attributes its reduced vandalism and burglary loss to school personnel (including night custodians on duty until midnight) occupying school buildings virtually 12 months a year, thereby making these schools an unattractive target for vandals and burglars (Brekke, 1984). Reporting on a survey of administrators in 79 school districts which use year round programs, Mossie J. Richmond, Jr. (1977) states that 60 per cent of the responding districts showed a decrease in the juvenile crime rate in schools on a year round schedule when compared to the populations of the same schools before changing from traditional schedules. A survey of Los Angeles parents by the University of Southern California found 60 percent of the parents reporting improvements in their children's attendance and attitudes toward school since moving into year round programs.

Increased Teacher/Student Employment Opportunities—Portland, Oregon, discovered that student employment was greatly increased when students were available in smaller numbers over more frequent vacation breaks (Howe, 1973). A year round schedule automatically staggers student availability in such a manner. When focusing on teachers, a recent study in New York indicates that one teacher in three holds a second job during the school year, and 53 per cent work during the summer (Doyle & Finn, 1985). Stated more directly, teaching is not the sole occupation of many teachers—a fact that has detracted from efforts to make teaching a true profession. Opportunities to teach during intersessions provide teachers with an opportunity to not only add to their income, but remain within their profession while doing so.

Improved Parent Satisfaction—When the student population declined in Colorado's Jefferson County School District in Colorado to the point where multi-track YRE was no longer necessary, parents resisted returning to the nine month school year after experiencing multiple vacations on a year round calendar (White, 1987, as cited in PDK, 1990, p. 60).

Enhanced Access to Substitute Teachers—Many school districts suffer from a shortage of qualified substitute teachers. Teachers on a year round calendar, who want to supplement their income without committing to teaching intersessions, have the option of joining the district's pool of substitute teachers. This practice not only benefits teachers' own districts but neighboring districts as well (Brekke, 1984, as cited in PDK, 1990, p. 65).

Increased Re-entry Opportunities for At-Risk Students—For students who have dropped out of school, a YRE calendar allows quarterly time frames, as well as intersessions, for re-entry rather than having students wait for the end of a complete semester (Forthun, 1992).

Reducing the Financial Burden to the Taxpayer—Multi-track plans reduce the financial burden of building new school sites, thereby contributing to significant savings in both operational and capital outlay costs. For example, schools costing $20 million to build will require at least another $20 million to service the bond debt, to repair and maintain, and to operate over a period of 30 years (Ballinger, 1988, as cited in PDK, 1990, p. 13).

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT YRE

As schools are faced with increasingly diverse student populations, the challenge of meeting their needs with limited resources is requiring the attention and efforts of all stakeholders. Because the debate over the proposal to restructure the traditional September-May calendar prompts many concerns among educators and parents, this report has already addressed many of the questions commonly asked by stakeholders. This section highlights summary responses to these questions as well as posing others. [Note: Except where noted, questions and responses are focused on single track YRE in elementary and high schools.]

How does a year round calendar help children learn?—Because learning is promoted in a continuous cycle of teaching, practice, application, and review, few students are best served by the traditional school calendar that preempts the formal learning process for a 12 week period each summer (Thomas & Pelavin, 1970). Consequently, YRE helps students learn for three reasons. First, by shortening the time spent away from formal learning in the summer, YRE is designed to reduce the time differential for

getting up to speed in the fall—a difference which is found to exist between the quickest and slowest learners (Parrish, 1989; Gitlin, 1988). Second, the traditional six week period of review in September and October effectively limits the time available for presenting new material for all students. Third, the delivery of instruction occurs at a better pace because instructional periods in a year round calendar lend themselves to blocks of learning.

Will uniformity in curriculum among schools within a district be maintained?—The answer to this question depends on whether or not all schools within a district adopt a year round calendar. For example, if a district's goal is to improve student achievement by having teachers revamp the pacing and delivery of curriculum, then a year round calendar allows teachers to "recapture" five weeks of the traditional review period. As a result, curricular differences would exist because schools on a YRE calendar would be introducing new material during this time while students on a traditional calendar would still be reviewing. This practice benefits all students since these 25 days are used for introducing new material to all students—regardless of their academic standing.

Will YRE hurt highly mobile students?—Teachers frequently cite high student mobility rates—and the subsequent effect on learning—as a reason not to implement YRE, especially if curriculum continuity across all schools in a district is not maintained. While this indeed is a concern, the bigger focus needs to be on the additional opportunities for learning offered by YRE for highly mobile students. For example, schools offering mid-semester intersessions could promote remedial/enrichment opportunities for such students so that they do not have to wait until summer to "catch up" with their peers. If summer intersessions are also offered, then children who would normally not be in school could be attending classes. These very differences in calendars would best serve the most mobile students if they were transferred to an educational setting offering these benefits.

How do intersessions benefit elementary students?—A year round calendar can use intersessions for remediation throughout the year so that small group instruction can target the specific needs of students rather than limiting remediation to summer school after nine months of failure and frustration. This can be especially true for the increasing numbers of students originating from homes where English is not the primary language; these students are especially ill-served when formal instruction is interrupted for a 12 week period. When intersessions are used for students to work on areas of weakness without the stigma of staying back a whole year, the self-esteem of students can be fostered throughout the entire school year.

How do intersessions benefit high school students?—A year round calendar offering a full intersession instructional program benefits secondary students in a variety of ways. To begin with, graduating seniors can *enter the labor market* any time throughout the year after completing the necessary coursework for graduation (Ballinger, 1989, as cited in PDK, 1990, p. 17). Additionally, students who attend intersessions can *graduate from high school early* and enter an institution of higher learning. To accomplish this, however, generally requires a student to receive increased guidance from counsellors in the areas of course selection and program planning in order to best utilize intersession program offerings. Further, significant numbers of students are without structured

activities during summer months; course offerings during this time afford students the opportunity to indulge their *interests in a new subject, complete course prerequisites, or receive remediation.* And finally, *student-athletes* who cannot handle more difficult subjects during their sport's season have an opportunity to take the course in spring, summer, or fall quarters.

Is YRE worth the effort if intersessions are not offered?—Given the additional costs associated with intersessions, some schools are not able to offer this option. Therefore, many schools and districts are convinced that realigning the same number of days over a longer period (i.e., implementing a year round calendar) is not worth the effort unless either remedial and/or enrichment activities are offered during intersessions. This belief, however, is faulty for the following reason. Curriculum for the traditional nine month calendar is currently designed to provide students with a six week period of review at the beginning of each school year. Such a review is necessary after a 12 week absence of students from classroom instruction. However, students on year round calendars are typically out of school during the summer for a six week period. This reduces the review period at the beginning of the school year to five days—instead of the traditional 30 days—thereby "freeing up" an additional 25 days in which new material can be taught. These 25 days can only be recaptured, however, if teachers are required to revamp the pacing and delivery of curriculum. The potential use of 25 additional days of instruction—at no extra cost to the district or taxpayer—must be considered even when funding for intersessions cannot be obtained.

How does YRE affect high school students seeking summer employment?—Currently, students on a traditional nine month calendar must compete with their peers for a limited number of employment opportunities during the 12 week summer break. This will hold true for the six week summer break for students on a single track year round calendar. However, in states like Arizona, it is important to note that the demand for students' labor is highest during fall, winter, and spring—which is the state's tourist season. Three week intersessions occurring during these seasons would permit students on a year round calendar to be employed—without having to compete for jobs with students on the traditional calendar.

What are the costs associated with YRE?—Depending on the type of YRE calendar chosen (i.e., single or multi-track) and the size of the school, costs associated with YRE vary greatly. Generally, some costs occur in the following areas: 1) intersession expenses, including teacher compensation and program materials; 2) transportation; and 3) maintenance and energy.

Given that YRE may operate 30 additional days per year due to fall, spring, and/or summer intersessions, additional compensation for teachers opting to teach these extra days will be necessary. For example, salaries for elementary teachers can range from $16,500 per intersession (10 half days for 350 children) to an estimated $38,000 per intersession (15 half days for 400 high school students).

Funding for intersession salaries and program materials is frequently derived from Chapter 1, migrant funds, business partnerships, and/or a reallocation of district funds. Some schools charge a nominal fee or tuition, especially for children enrolled in enrichment or acceleration classes. For those schools and districts considering YRE but hindered by a lack of funding for intersessions, the year round calendar offers the additional benefit of

recapturing 25 days of curriculum review—at no additional expense to the district.

In reference to transportation costs, there have been no significant costs associated with transporting YRE students when an *entire* district adopts a year round calendar; buses merely pick up students on the same daily routes as they did on a traditional calendar. However, when only one school in a district adopts a year round calendar and provides transportation for intradistrict transfers—as in the case of Tempe High School in Arizona—costs are projected to range from $25,000 to $76,000 per year. In addition, some school districts in Arizona have found it necessary to equip buses with air conditioning.

YRE programs also result in additional costs in the areas of maintenance, energy, and supplies. For example, Palmcroft Elementary School in Yuma, Arizona, has determined that costs associated with their 45-15 calendar are approximately $1,000 a month. [Note: Fixed charges such as insurance, interest, and capital outlay remain fairly constant whether schools are open or not.]

Although there are costs associated with year round education—particularly if intersessions are offered— many schools point to improved attendance, reduced vandalism, and increases in climate and self-esteem measures as outweighing the costs. Reasons given for these outcomes include the extended use of the school building both in a longer day and a "longer" year; buildings are not left vacant and unsupervised for three months at a time; and students' improved attitudes. In addition to these benefits, YRE allows teachers the option of working a full year—if intersessions are provided. This serves to promote teaching as a profession since teachers are not required to seek summer employment outside their profession. Another "perk" allows teachers employed during intersessions to "bank" this time and salary; within a two year period, sufficient time has accumulated to earn a paid sabbatical for one semester of graduate work (Forthun, 1992). A further option allows teachers on vacation (i.e., intersession) to substitute for their own school or others in the district.

Won't students, teachers, and administrators burn out?—While some concern exists that *students'* mental and physical endurance will be unduly challenged on a year round calendar that eliminates a 12 week vacation period (although children are only required to attend the same number of days as the traditional schedule), there is no research to support this concern. However, some *teachers* who initially embraced the opportunity to increase their salaries by extended contracts (for intersessions) have experienced burnout with time; by the end of two years, many use intersession periods for vacation. As with any change, implementing and overseeing YRE can be taxing on *administrators* due to the additional burdens of scheduling intersessions, dealing with community unrest, and general opposition to change; however, once YRE becomes institutionalized, administrators can enjoy the benefits of more frequent vacation periods as well.

What happens if families have children enrolled in different schools on different schedules?—Since a YRE calendar does not align with the September-May calendar, this scenario could occur in a district that has schools on both YRE and traditional calendars. Children from the same family could be on intersessions (i.e., vacation) at different times—especially if the high school is on a traditional schedule or a different YRE plan than the elementary school. As a countermeasure, many districts permit students to transfer to a school that maintains

a traditional calendar to maintain the continuity of one calendar for all siblings—if, indeed, that is the desire of the parents.

How does YRE affect childcare provisions?—Reducing summer vacations to six weeks (on a 45-15 calendar) and allowing students to attend enrichment/remedial activities during intersessions significantly reduces the amount of time children spend in daycare facilities. Parents who cannot afford childcare during the summer months, or before and after school, are provided with opportunities to have their children participate in supervised activities at the neighborhood school rather than remain at home unsupervised. In some cases, such as in Yuma, Arizona, community-based programs (e.g., YMCA) began to provide services during these times. However, schools and communities may offer such activities only two of the three week intersession periods—thereby causing parents to find daycare for one week periods. In addition, not all students may choose to attend intersessions, or may not be able to afford to if a fee is charged.

When do teachers pursue graduate degrees?—Given that many teachers currently take university-based courses during their summer break, this question at first glance poses a problem. However, a year round calendar provides teachers with the flexibility to teach intersessions, receive financial remuneration, and insure some time off during the summer to take graduate classes. Furthermore, if a teacher was to teach intersessions for two years without reimbursement, the teacher could have the additional benefit of taking off an entire semester to return to school full time without taking a cut in salary (Forthun, 1992). In addition to each of these scenarios, evening classes are still available or teachers can attend one 5-week summer session during the shortened summer break. However, universities serving teachers from YRE schools have had to be more flexible in the scheduling of classes, especially those occurring during teachers' shortened summer break. As the YRE concept continues to gain in popularity, universities will have to develop such flexibility in the scheduling of their course offerings.

How is building maintenance affected?—Since schools in the past have generally not been utilized during the summer months, there was significantly more time available for major cleaning and maintenance projects. In YRE, major cleaning must be schedule for weekends and/or evenings; however, this can be more costly and less conducive to longer term projects (e.g., painting). In addition, for those on a multi-track, the increased use of school buildings results in substantially more wear and tear, with little opportunity for preventative maintenance. While cost savings are realized due to not having to construct and maintain a new facility, there are additional costs associated with maintain existing facilities.

How is planning and scheduling affected on a multi-track calendar?—Multi-track calendars require teachers to move from room to room when assigned to instruct different tracks; as a result, a greater amount of shared space for storage of teacher and pupil materials is needed. In addition, it requires additional planning of schedules and more communication between those on-track (i.e., in school) and those off-track (i.e., out of school); consequently, there is an increase in clerical staff time. Inservicing of teachers throughout the school year requires one track of teachers to return from their intersessions, or additional inservicing must occur when

they return. Further, continually changing bus schedules with alternating tracks requires tighter scheduling to obtain maximum utilization out of existing equipment.

Are course offerings affected on a multi-track calendar?—Year-round multi-track programs tend to force the combination of, or elimination of, lower enrollment specialized programs. In high school programs, "singleton" courses can only be offered on one track, creating problems of specializing tracking. In addition, course continuity is not maintained if teachers assigned to a specific track desire to extend their contract by teaching during their assigned intersessions; students return to a substitute teacher for the second quarter of instruction.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS

Advocates of YRE around the nation are posing the following question to policymakers: "Of what value to society is a situation in which urban and suburban teenagers are free to roam neighborhood streets, unsupervised, unemployed, and unoccupied, for up to three months? (Ballinger, 1988, p. 59). At a time when we need to maximize the use of every dollar, YRE is an alternative worthy of examination. Having been in existence for over 100 years, we are just now beginning to examine its true potential as one aspect of the reform debate. Declining state revenue continues to limit the funds allocated to education; knowing this, policymakers are in a key position to assist schools and districts seeking innovative strategies to regain the confidence of their stakeholders—parents, community members, and business alike.

Regaining this confidence will require improving test scores, implementing programs designed to meet the needs of at-risk students, and aligning curriculum into blocks of instruction to facilitate learning. It will also require opportunities for remedial and enrichment activities throughout the school year to improve dropout rates, increase graduation rates, lower absenteeism, deter vandalism, decrease retention rates, and improve students' self-esteem.

At a time when dollars are scarce, the outcomes noted above might only be considered a "wish list" for when the fiscal future of the state has a light at the end of the tunnel. However, these outcomes are indeed being realized by a variety of YRE schools in a number of states right now. The reasons generally given for this are twofold: 1) reduced learning loss over a shortened summer vacation period reduces curriculum review in September from six weeks to one week, thereby providing five "additional" weeks of instruction at no extra cost; and 2) intersessions utilized for remedial activities diffuse students' frustration and sense of failure that normally accumulates over a nine month period, thereby facilitating the academic progress of these students on a continuing basis.

Unfortunately, the one obstacle preventing a number of schools and districts from pursuing a year round calendar—other than fostering community support for breaking the bonds of tradition—is the funds to pay salaries for intersessions and additional energy costs. While these two issues represent the greatest percentage of expenses, schools must also consider costs associated with transportation, supplies, and secretarial/maintenance salaries. For example, Palmcroft Elementary in Yuma, Arizona, realized $19,000 in expenses for a 10 half-day intersession period on a single track calendar; Tempe High School is forecasting $45,000 in intersession expenses

for teacher/support staff salaries as well as transportation (see Appendix B). Additional cooling costs during the summer months can average $1,000 a week (as per Palmcroft Elementary, Yuma, AZ). While a number of schools are creatively using Chapter 1, migrant, and K-3 overrides for related expenses, many have already allocated these funds to current programs. Consequently, schools frequently find themselves seeking additional funding for YRE activities.

The issue, therefore, of additional funding is often used to block this reform. Although YRE really does not cost a great deal to implement (almost nothing if intersession programs are not offered), some small amount of seed money would greatly enhance the opportunities for many schools to realize the benefits associated with adopting a year round calendar. A relatively small amount of funding (e.g., $15,000 for elementary; $20,000 for middle schools; $25,000 for high schools), when augmented by school/district funds, would be sufficient to prompt a growing number of schools/districts (as evidenced by increasing attendance at conferences such as Arizona's annual YRE conference) to implement YRE. Policymakers in Arizona and elsewhere have a unique opportunity to promote a viable reform that has far-reaching implications.

The challenges of the 21st century are looming in the not-to-distant future, and the anxieties of a nation hang in the balance as policymakers, parents, business leaders, and leading educators seek to equip the generation that will contend with these challenges. While there is no initiative that will remedy all education's ills, year round education is one component of reform worthy of our collective attention.

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APPENDIX A
DESCRIPTION OF YRE CALENDARS

No one YRE schedule has been proven to be the best because each district must first assess its needs prior to selecting one of the many plans currently being implemented around the nation. These plans are briefly described in order to illustrate the meny of year round calendars (Glines, 1987):

Staggered 45-15—Four groups (tracks) of students are rotated through four 9-week instructional blocks and 3-week vacation blocks (one track is always on vacation, thereby increasing capacity by 25 per cent).

Block 45-15—All students are placed on a single track and attend the same 9-week instructional blocks and 3-week vacation blocks.

Flexible 45-15—Individualized instruction (especially reading and math) is individualized so that students may jump tracks for special reasons on four 9-week learning blocks and 3-week vacation blocks.

Staggered, Block, Flexible 60-20 —Similar to the 45-15 plan except that students rotate through three 60-day learning blocks and three 20-day vacation periods, with one of the four groups again always on vacation.

Staggered, Block, Flexible 90-30—The same as plans in the 45-15 and 60-20 calendars, except that students attend school for two separated 90-day learning blocks and have two 30-day vacation blocks.

Concept 6—Consists of six 40-44 day learning blocks; students attend four of the six blocks (two in succession) and have two separate 40-44 day vacation periods (this plan provides overlapping days or longer school days to reach a 180 day requirement).

Concept 8—Consists of eight 6-week terms with students selecting or assigned six of the eight terms.

Concept 16—Consists of 16 three-week terms (students select or are assigned 12 of the 16).

Multiple Access—Consists of a partially individualized 45-15 plan where students can enter or learn at any three-week interval, with the curriculum in three or nine-week units, or individualized.

Quarter Plan—Consists of four 12-week terms (fall, winter, spring, summer) with students selecting or being assigned three of the four terms.

Quinmester—Consists of five 9-week quinmesters (terms) with students selecting or being assigned four of the five quins.

60-15—Consists of three 60-day terms with three 15-day vacations and a common all-school summer vacation (curriculum is taught in modules to overlapping, staggered groups).

Extended School Year—More than a 180-day calendar, it has staggered blocks (such as four 50-day terms and four 15-day vacations).

Summer Term—A conventional nine-month calendar but with a full summer term that offers continuous learning integrated with the nine-month curriculum rather than short six-week discontinuous summer school courses.

Flexible All Year—School is open 240 days with students selecting 180 of the 240 days (the curriculum is in small self-paced packages to allow for interrupted learning blocks and differentiated vacation periods of one day to several weeks at any time).

Personalized Continuous Year—A completely flexible, personalized calendar where students can come and go as desired on a daily basis (the curriculum is totally individualized).

APPENDIX B

While the number of Arizona schools and districts adopting a year round calendar continues to grow each year, a sampling of the ones that have, or are in the process of making such a transition, are profiled in this section. Key stakeholders (e.g., district office administrators, building principals) from each of these schools/districts were interviewed in early Spring, 1994, by Morrison Institute researchers. Each reviewed their school's or district's summary as represented in this section. It is important to note that more current information may be available by contacting the schools/districts themselves.

Figure 3. Sample of Year Round Schools in Arizona

School District	YRE Implemented	Estimated # of students in YRE (1994-95	# of schools in district on yr. round calendar (1994-95)	Type of Calendar	Schedule	Intersessions		
						# of weeks per year	% of students participating	Funding Sources
Chandler Unified S.D.								
•Frye Elementary	1993-94			single	45-15	6-7	50%	Chapter I; fees
•Galveston Elementary	↓			↓	↓	6-7	50%	Chapter I; fees
•Knox Elementary	1994-95			↓	↓	N/A	N/A	N/A
•San Marcos Elementary	↓	2,735	4/17	multi	↓	↓	↓	↓
•Humphrey Elementary	1995-96			single	↓	↓	↓	↓
•Shumway Elementary	↓			↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
•Sanborn Elementary	↓			↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
•Willis J. H.	↓			↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Crane Elementary S.D.								
•all schools (5 elementary; 1 J.H.)	1992-93	5,000	6/6	dual	45-15	7	30%	Chapter I; fees;
•all schools	1993-94			single				migrant funds
Mohave Elementary S.D.								
•all schools (2 elementary; 1 J.H.	1992-93	600	3/3	single	60-20	4	20%	fees; federal; district
•all schools	1994-95			multi				
Tempe Elementary S.D.								
•Tempe High School	1995-96	N/A	0/5	single	45-15	N/A	N/A	Chapter I; district
Washington Elementary S.D.								
•Mountain View Elementary	1994-95	1,050	1/32	single	45-15	4	N/A	Chapter I; grants; business donations
Yuma Elementary S.D.								
•Palmcroft Elementary	1991-92	5-6,000	9/15	single	45-15	4	30%	Chapter I; migrant funds; K-3 overrides; fees (range from $5-$30 depending on school)
•Price Elementary	1992-93			↓	↓			
•Otondo Elementary	1993-94			↓	↓			
•Gwyneth Ham Elementary	↓			↓	↓			
•Roosevelt Elementary	↓			↓	↓			
•Post Elementary	↓			↓	↓			
•Fourth Avenue J.H.	↓			↓	↓			
•C.W. McGraw Elementary	1994-95			↓	↓			
•Woodard J.H.	↓			↓	↓			

Chandler Unified School District
Chandler, AZ

Background

Chandler Unified School District currently has 13 elementary (K-6) schools, 3 junior high schools, and 1 high school. Two elementary schools, Frye, with 514 students, and Galveston, with 714 students, implemented 45/15 single track calendars in 1993-94. Both Chapter I schools, each has 75-85 percent of its students eligible for free and reduced-price lunches. Both have similar student demographics with approximately 60 percent white and 40 percent Hispanic.

In response to the rapid growth in the district, an 80 member Task Force—consisting of community members and faculty—was convened in 1991 to investigate the feasibility of YRE. The Task Force focused on the philosophical issues related to YRE. The final report, issued in May, 1992, concluded that YRE was feasible as long as extensive two-way communication occurred at each school site and the staff, students and parents supported the implementation of a YRE calendar. The Task Force recommended that a year round calendar should focus on 1) improving the delivery of education to promote gains in student achievement; and 2) accommodating rapid growth without increasing bond indebtedness.

Planning

Participants—School site personnel, parents, and community members were involved in planning at the school level.

Buy-in—The primary goal of the Task Force during 1992/93 was to "blitz" the community with information regarding YRE. To do this, the district utilized a variety of media: newsletters; cable television; faculty and staff meetings; regional meetings for all stakeholders; and surveys (mailed forms as well as random telephone calls) of community agencies, churches, faculty, staff, and parents. In addition, a community-wide forum featured Dr. Norman Brekke, superintendent of the Oxnard Elementary School District in California, who discussed the benefits and barriers of implementing a year round calendar.

Neither the governing board nor the superintendent believed in mandating specific schools to adopting a year round calendar; therefore, community support was considered an essential prerequisite. Both Frye's and Galveston's school communities supported YRE; parents' and teachers' requests to transfer to another school were insignificant, although several teachers from other district schools requested transfers to Frye and Galveston because of the new calendars.

Implementation

Intersessions—Remedial and enrichment classes are offered from 8 AM to 2 PM for two of the three week fall and spring intersession periods, with breakfast and lunch being provided. A 2-3 week summer intersession is also offered prior to the beginning of the new school year. All students at Galveston walk to school; Frye students are offered transportation during fall, spring, and summer intersessions.

In the fall, 1993, intersession, approximately 50 percent of the student population participated. While each school plans its own intersession programs, teachers generally use a thematic approach in their planning. Each class was limited to 15-20 children.

Curriculum and Instruction—With less time spent in review, there has been a broader, deeper presentation of curriculum; the

delivery of curriculum is not related to YRE. Increased collaboration among teachers has also occurred.

Cost—Minimum cost estimates of $3,000-$5,000 are projected for each school on a single track calendar; an additional $100,000 is needed in maintenance and operations funds for San Marcos on a multi-track calendar. [Note: Chapter I funds are used to provide remedial classes for Chapter I students during intersessions; all other students are charged a fee.]

Barriers—The Task Force Feasibility Report anticipated the following barriers: funding for intersessions; scheduling building maintenance; transportation; pursuit of graduate degrees by teachers; bonds of a traditional September-May calendar; and complicating the administration of the school.

Evaluation

Criteria—The district has contracted with two researchers from Northern Arizona University to evaluate their YRE program. Through the use of interviews, surveys, and test results, the researchers will conduct longitudinal studies of student achievement on district curriculum and state tests; the opinions and perceptions of all participants; attendance; and tracking of students in at-risk programs.

Benefits—Teachers are already reporting that less time is being spent on reviewing previous material. In addition, there is increased morale and better attitudes among the staff.

Use of Evaluation—Evaluation results will be used internally to answer the question: "Has the year round calendar facilitated appropriate changes in the classroom?" Evaluation findings will be formally presented to the Governing Board in Fall, 1994, as well as to parents, teachers, and communities.

Impact on Other Schools—Following the pioneering efforts of Frye and Galveston, Knox and San Marcos elementary schools joined their ranks by adopting a single track 45-15 calendar and a multi-track 45-15 calendar respectively effective in 1994-95. Three elementaries (Humphrey, Sanborn, and Shumway) and one junior high school (Willis) will adopt single track 45-15 calendars effective in the 1995-96 school year.

Contact—Dr. Camille Casteel, Assistant Superintendent

Crane Elementary School District
Yuma, AZ

Background

Located in southwestern Arizona, the Crane Elementary School District serves an ethnically diverse K-8 student population of more than 5,000. Believing that a year round calendar better serves students, the superintendent was an instrumental motivational force in promoting YRE by establishing a Facilities Committee in 1989 to investigate the district's future capacity. With an annual growth rate of 7-11 percent, the Committee recommended a Task Force be established to formally investigate YRE.

The Task Force recommended a single track calendar for its five elementary schools and multi-track for the fundamental and junior high schools. Not until parents of students from the fundamental school realized that a multi-track year round calendar was imminent did an organized voice of opposition occur. Although the superintendent believed that the governing board would still have passed the Task Force's recommendation by a 3-2 vote, the board's approval of the calendar was delayed. The superintendent's district management team recommended salvaging the YRE concept by having no schools on a multi-track calendar and instead placing all schools on dual traditional and single track calendars (i.e., a school-within-a-school). Opposition quieted, and the board voted 5-0 in favor of the dual calendars being implemented in 1992-93.

Planning

Participants—Under the leadership of the superintendent, a district-level task force was assembled to make the transition from a traditional calendar to a year round calendar.

Buy-in—When the district office required the year round calendar option be made available for special education students, each principal was responsible for handling faculty assignments at their school sites; most schools used consensus to determine who would remain on the traditional calendar and who would switch to the 45-15 single track year round calendar. Flexible schedules resulted in several special area teachers working four days a week over a longer period of weeks in order to meet the needs of students on both calendars. Approximately 2,800 students (40 percent) chose YRE; even parents who had originally opposed the new calendar reconsidered and enrolled their students in YRE.

Implementation

Intersessions—When operating under dual calendars, the district decided to get the two calendars "up and running" prior to introducing remedial and enrichment activities during intersessions. Consequently, intersession activities did not begin until Spring, 1993. Currently, all six schools offer two weeks of intersession activities in both fall and spring; approximately 30 percent of students participate. Three schools also offer three week summer intersessions.

Curriculum and Instruction—In order to improve student achievement, curriculum and instruction focused on cooperative learning, thematic units, schoolwide use of technology, before-and-after school programs, and district reading programs. Every program showed an increase in student learning for two successive years.

Cost—Anticipated costs for intersession programs, energy, and salaries were forecasted to be 20 percent above those associated with a traditional calendar; however, additional costs for all six schools

for all three intersessions (6 schools—2 weeks each fall and spring; 3 schools—3 weeks during summer) cost $66,000. Intersessions were tuitioned on a per student basis at parents' expense ($10/class with two classes offered per day), although Chapter 1 and migrant funds subsidized much of the costs.

Barriers—During the first year of operating a school-within-a-school, principals had the additional pressure of overseeing the implementation of dual calendars at each of their school sites. When intersessions occurred for those on a year round calendar, the traditional calendar still required the principal to supervise those still in session. As a result, principals were working more days with additional responsibilities and no administrative support.

Evaluation

Criteria—The district office is compiling data on attendance, student achievement, costs, and surveys of parents.

Benefits— The original opposition to a year round calendar had 37 percent of the parents "strongly opposed"; however, one year later, 77 percent are strongly in favor of it.

Use of Evaluation—The district office provides the governing board, schools, parents, and community members the results of the data.

Impact on Other Schools—At the direction of the governing board, 1993-94 saw five of the six schools make the transition from a dual calendar to a single track 45-15 calendar (all six schools will be on this calendar in 1994-95).

Contact—Mr. Dan Branine, Principal, Rancho Viejo Elementary School

Mohave Valley Elementary School District
Mohave Valley, AZ

Background

The Mohave Valley Elementary School District serves over 1,600 K-8 students with two K-6 schools and one junior high school. The 1992-93 school year marked the district's first on a 60-20 year round calendar. The move to YRE grew out of a "facility needs" study completed by a parent group in March, 1991, which initially provided data on the cost-effectiveness of a multi-track year round calendar.

The group recognized that a single track calendar focuses on increasing student achievement, whereas a multi-track model is utilized for maximizing facility usage. Since over-crowding was not an immediate concern, the study group pursued their interest in YRE by studying a single track year round calendar. Consequently, a 60-20 single track model was recommended.

With only a small faction of community members opposed to the year round calendar, it was unanimously approved by the governing board for implementation in 1992-93; however, the district found a much stronger opposition to YRE in the 1992 elections. Two of three board members seeking re-election were defeated, with the two newly elected members opposed to YRE. In addition, two incumbent board members were the target of a recall drive—the consequence of having supported the district's adopting a year round calendar. Their subsequent re-election in January, 1993, by a 6-to-1 margin affirmed the community's support for the district's direction.

Currently in the second year of implementing the 60-20 calendar, the district has made the transition to a multi-track year round calendar. With significant growth in student enrollment being anticipated for the next several years, the community decided that a multi-track year round calendar would provide a short-term cost-effective means of increasing the district's capacity to house students without incurring a projected three-fold increase in taxes to fund a new building. Within the next three years, the district will consider facility needs and plans to accommodate further enrollment growth.

Planning

Participants—The district continues to involve parents, staff, community, and governing board members in its planning for future facility needs.

Buy-in—The district has employed staff workshops, parent-teacher conferences, and governing board updates to ensure all stakeholders are informed regarding the transition to a multi-track model. Parent-teacher conferences reached 83 percent of the parent community with no opposition to the transition surfacing. Earlier community opposition to YRE seems to have dissipated, and staff are continuing in their support for the concept.

Implementation

Calendar—This district will continue to use the 60/20 calendar with the multi-track model. Teachers have selected individual tracks; parents and students registered and selected tracks in April, 1994. District-established procedures and guidelines for selection and assignment to calendar tracks provided for a balanced enrollment throughout the year. For example, all siblings in one family must register for the same track. Students who do not select a track will be assigned one by district staff.

However, with a 235-day school year and 75 percent of the study body in session at any one time, the multi-track model has necessitated some flexibility in issuing certificated and non-certificated contracts. Administration, instructional staff (i.e., special area teachers), and support staff will have re-configured work schedules such as 12 month contracts instead of 10.5 month contracts, short-term (i.e., 4 month) contracts, or 4 day instead of 5 day work weeks.

Intersessions—On the single track calendar, two week intersessions were offered during November and March for four hours a day. Response to "maintenance" and special interest classes of approximately 12-15 students each was good; nearly 20 percent of the student body (largely younger children and ESL students) have attended intersession programs. Enrichment activities included computer classes; a science club; and a spirit club which has cross-age tutoring.

Curriculum and Instruction—Believing that curriculum in all major areas undergo continuous review and revision, it has not been impacted by YRE. However, the nine week grading period in the traditional calendar had to be modified to a six week grading period once a 60-20 calendar was adopted. This placed stress on teachers for parent/teacher conferences because teachers have been accustomed to providing mid-term conferences as well.

Cost—Teachers are being paid $19.50 an hour during intersessions. Funds are derived from Chapter 2, district and federal funds, as well as a $10 fee per student. In addition, the district also found it necessary to provide several air conditioned buses, the cost of which will be spread out over three years.

Barriers—Anticipated barriers to implementing a 60/20 single track year round calendar became "non-factors." Custodial and building maintenance staff prefer the year round calendar because it provides more frequent opportunities to maintain school facilities and equipment. The multi-track program will offer similar benefits for maintenance. For teachers enrolled in graduate programs, their needs have been accommodated by Northern Arizona University with classes being conducted at Mohave school sites.

Evaluation

Criteria—With the exception of establishing baseline test scores on ITBS and ASAP for grades three through eight, no formal evaluation procedures have been established. Individual principals are also examining other variables for site-specific indicators.

A faculty and parent survey evaluating the October, 1993, intersession was administered; parents and community members will be interviewed in the future. Informal evaluations of parent and staff attitudes indicate strong support for YRE for both single and multi-track models.

Benefits—As a result of YRE, instructional delivery has become more efficient and effective. These effects are most apparent in the use of grading periods. Preliminary comparisons of test scores indicate that student achievement has increased steadily over the past three to four years, and the with the last two years demonstrating the most improvement. Because the YRE calendar imposes limits, teachers are better able to organize instructional content by setting goals and assessing student progress at mid-quarter. Students return from intersession enthusiastic and more prepared to work.

Contact—Dr. Emmett Brown, Superintendent

Tempe Union High School District
Tempe High School, Tempe, AZ

Background

Tempe Union High School District (TUHSD) has five schools that serve approximately 9,300 students in grades 9-12. Interest in YRE initially occurred when the governing board attended a meeting in early 1992 that focused on the benefits of a year round calendar. Subsequently, the superintendent visited a San Diego high school district on a year round calendar that had overcome challenges similar to those of TUHSD. As a result, the governing board adopted three conditions regarding the district's consideration of YRE: 1) there will be no mandate from the superintendent to any of the high schools to look into YRE; consequently, each school can explore YRE voluntarily; 2) parents in the attendance area must be surveyed; and 3) no staff member or student would be required to work or attend a school on a year round calendar. An "open transfer" policy would be enacted for both staff and students.

In January, 1994, the Tempe Union High School District's governing board granted its approval of Tempe High School's proposal for a year round calendar beginning in the 1995-96 school year. With the smallest enrollment of the five district high schools and a facility capacity for 2,000 students, Tempe High currently serves approximately 1,300 students. The adopted calendar—which caps more than two years of research and planning by district personnel, faculty, and parents—is a modified 45/15 single track calendar that will allow YRE students to graduate in late May with the remaining schools still on a traditional calendar.

Planning

Participants—Since 1992, a year round education committee at Tempe High has been investigating the merits of a single track year round calendar. Initially composed of certified and classified staff, the committee expanded its membership in Spring, 1994, to include parents and students. Planning continues to occur as committee members explore funding opportunities for intersessions and an evaluation instrument by which the success of the calendar can be evaluated.

Buy-in—A faculty survey conducted in 1992 showed interest in a year round calendar to span the continuum of committed support to total non-support. Based on these results, a core committee of faculty developed a YRE proposal that was submitted to the governing board in September, 1993. The principal kept the school's Advisory Board, composed of staff and parents, informed of the YRE committee's progress. No parental or community input or survey was planned until after the development of a proposal.

In September, 1993, the district commissioned a survey of the community and parents regarding attitudes toward a year round calendar in the district. The survey indicated that 74 percent of community members surveyed—who had an opinion of year round education—were supportive of YRE, and 59 percent of the parents who had children attending Tempe High were supportive of the alternative calendar. A student survey, conducted in December, 1993, revealed that students supported a year round calendar by a ratio of 3 to 1.

Implementation

Intersessions—Three week fall, spring, and summer intersessions will be offered. These sessions will be for a half day, depending on

course offerings and credit hours required. In addition to district funds, a portion of Chapter I funds may be targeted to fund programs for remediation and enrichment classes. At this time, attempts are being made not to have any students pay a fee for classes offered during intersessions. Although student participation in intersessions will be voluntary, students—especially those needing remediation—will be "strongly urged" to attend. It is anticipated that approximately 25 percent of the student body will enroll in intersession courses. Transportation during intersessions will be provided to students who have transferred from other attendance areas to Tempe High School for the year round calendar.

Faculty wishing to teach during intersessions will apply to do so; however, classroom teachers will be given priority, followed by teachers drawn from the substitute list. No shortage of interested teachers is anticipated.

Extra-curricular activities will not be affected by the year round calendar, with the exception of interscholastic sports. These activities will be scheduled according to a traditional calendar, with events occurring during intersession breaks.

Curriculum and Instruction—As a result of restructuring the school year, the planning committee and faculty are examining ways of delivering education differently, such as block scheduling or cooperative activities (e.g., business and government partnerships). In addition, faculty are addressing the issues of how courses are offered (e.g., team-teaching, interdisciplinary programs), restructuring the course credit system, and student assessment. Intense curriculum and instruction planning will take place during Summer, 1994.

Costs—Personnel costs per intersession (including support staff) are estimated at $45,500; estimated transportation costs vary from $25,000 for one bus for three intersessions to $76,000 for four buses for four intersessions. Utility costs for June-September are forecasted to increase approximately $22,000.

Barriers—With the exception of finding sufficient funding sources for intersessions, the planning committee has addressed the following issues: selection process for intersession employment, maintenance, athletic schedules and extra-curricular activities, student employment, course credits, community approval, feeder district on traditional calendars, and post-graduate courses for teachers. Transportation may be need to be provided to students who transfer to or from other high schools in the district.

Evaluation

Criteria—Areas being considered for evaluation include: 1) enrollment trends pre and post YRE; 2) dropout rates by grade level; 3) grades and student achievement scores pre and post YRE; 5) school climate surveys; and 6) student/faculty/parent satisfaction surveys. Since the school is only at 60 percent capacity, there is little concern about over-enrollment if the program should become very popular.

Benefits—Two primary benefits are anticipated: student achievement will improve (especially for middle and low-achieving students) and the dropout rate will decrease. Of major concern is how to make the most effective use of intersessions. The goals are to provide remediation opportunities for students failing a class, as well as offer student enrichment and/or acceleration.

Contact—Mr. Victor Sanchez, Principal, Tempe High School

Washington Elementary S.D.
Mountain View Elementary School, Phoenix, AZ

Background

In an urban/suburban school district of over 23,000 K-8 students, Mountain View Elementary is a total Chapter I school serving 1,040 children in grades K-6. Over 90 percent of its students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch and has an annual mobility rate exceeding 50 percent. Approximately half of its students are minority, with 40 percent comprising the school's ESL population. In addition to its regular K-6 program, Mountain View also offers a Headstart and P.R.A.I.S.E. program, a state-funded pre-school and parenting education program.

Consideration of YRE began five years ago when the principal evaluated the school and its needs. High mobility, changing demographics, and too much time spent in instructional review convinced him that Mountain View needed a new paradigm as a school. Once the remodelling, expansion, and upgrading of Mountain View's facility was accomplished in September, 1993, the school's site council's pursuit of YRE began in earnest. Governing board approval was granted in November, 1993, for the 1994/95 school year.

Planning

Participants—A steering committee, composed primarily of school staff, focused on: 1) the development and implementation of a single track 45/15 calendar; 2) instructional delivery; and 3) intersessions. The site council was kept informed of progress.

Buy-in—The steering committee, in conjunction with members of the site council, conducted YRE workshops, presentations, and parent/community meetings. A Spring, 1993, survey indicated a majority of teacher support and parental support at 84 percent.

Implementation

Intersessions—Remedial, Chapter I, enrichment, and recreational classes will be scheduled for October and March; consideration is being given to a summer intersession. Staffing will be provided by faculty, Salt River Project (two voluntary teachers), community businesses, community members, parents, as well as ASU interns and student teachers. It is anticipated that a "menu" of 40 to 50 options will be made available for students. Two 2-hour classes each will be offered in the morning and afternoon; breakfast and lunch will be available.

Student participation in intersession activities will be voluntary; however, because of the high mobility rate, students who enter school in the middle of a regular sessions may be referred to intersession for skill-building. Chapter I instruction will be tied to intersessions.

Curriculum and Instruction—To maximize the benefits of an instructional day on a year round calendar, faculty will use a thematic-unit approach in a quarter grading system, with a curriculum focusing on essential skills and Basic Skills Test outcomes. Professors from ASU West are currently providing staff development in the creation of thematic units. With many of the school's teachers with multiple teaching certificates (e.g., elementary, ESL, gifted, special education), teachers at all grade levels are being encouraged to develop multiple skills across grade levels and special areas. In

addition, all teachers will remain with the same class for two consecutive years. In addition, faculty are looking at changing the form of assessment to portfolios or performance assessments.

Costs—Funding for intersessions will be derived from Chapter I; business donations and grants will also be sought. Fees or tuition are considered unlikely. A comparison of costs for air conditioning on a traditional calendar versus a year round calendar are set at $500-$600; the school will examine energy conservation measures.

Barriers—One of the first barriers to overcome is that of teacher acceptance; however, provisions allow for both teacher and student transfers. Funding for intersessions has not been specifically identified. Graduate programs for teachers are not expected to present a barrier because many are looking at alternative programs (e.g., Ottawa, NOVA, University of Phoenix). District-wide budget cuts would have a significant impact because the schools has made commitments to its teachers (i.e. no teachers are shared with other schools).

Evaluation

Criteria—Evaluation will include student portfolios, ITBS scores, Chapter I, and BST testing; parents, staff, and student opinion surveys; and re-evaluation of demographics changes. Cost and budget evaluation will be conducted only if the school is given total site responsibility for funding. No value judgment will be made on the success of the new calendar for a minimum of three years. Results of the evaluation process will be provided once per semester to the district office and governing board.

Benefits—The primary benefit is anticipated to be student achievement. Additionally, ESL students should move more quickly into the regular classes; less time will be spent in reviewing material after each break; and more creative teaching with an integrated curriculum should result in higher levels of mastery.

Impact on Other Schools—No other school in the district is considering a year round calendar.

Contact—Mr. Joel Davidson, Principal

Yuma Elementary School District Palmcroft Elementary School, Yuma, AZ

Background

One of 14 schools in the Yuma Elementary School District, Palmcroft serves an ethnically diverse K-5 student body of approximately 720 students; the annual mobility rate averages 28 percent. The principal initiated faculty interest in YRE; subsequently, a Committee on YRE was formed to investigate the barriers and benefits. District office support for a single track year round calendar was prompted by the school's awarding of a $180,000 four year (1990-94) restructuring grant from the state. Subsequently, a 45-15 year round calendar was approved and implemented in the 1991-92 school year. Due to the opening of a new elementary school and the changing of school boundaries for the 1991-92 school year, 42 percent of the students currently attending Palmcroft attended other district schools during 1990-91.

Planning

Participants—The Committee on YRE—comprised of faculty, staff, parents, and community members—attended a national YRE convention; researched existing programs; conducted information sessions with parents and community members; and surveyed faculty and parents.

Buy-in—Both teachers and students were given the option to transfer to district schools with traditional calendars; three teachers exercised this option.

Implementation

Intersessions—Both remedial and enrichment activities are provided for approximately 320 students (45 percent) of the student population. Classes are offered from 8 AM to 11:30 AM, with students bringing their only lunches.

Costs—Costs average $19,000 for each 10-day intersession; each student is charged $5 to enroll. Certified teachers receive $16 per hour and non-certified receive $7 per hour. Transportation is provided during intersessions, and student participation has continued to grow.

Funds from the Restructuring grant were used to purchase extra physical education equipment, fans, and drinking fountains. Increased costs associated with utilities, cafeteria services, and transportation were paid for by the district (utility costs increased by $1,000 per week for five weeks). Health benefits and social security for faculty working through intersessions were paid by the district for the first two years; these expenditures will be paid from the restructuring grant in 1993-94.

Barriers—For those teachers *already enrolled* in a graduate program, substitutes were hired for several weeks during the summer months to allow regular classroom teachers to attend classes offered by Northern Arizona University—all while being paid their regular salary.

The inertia of tradition was found to be the biggest barrier in implementing YRE. The traditional school calendar has been a fixture in the lives of almost every citizen. Changing the school calendar is a laborious task requiring the determination and dedication of the school site, central office, and governing board to be success.

Parents and faculty warned of problems that never came to fruition: 1) parents having to find childcare during intersessions; 2) scheduling graduate classes for faculty; and 3) the summer heat. Although childcare was

offered during the first intersession, only one child registered; consequently, the program was canceled with no complaints. Indoor physical education equipment and additional drinking fountains have alleviated parents and faculty's concerns regarding the hot summer temperatures when school begins in August.

Evaluation

Criteria—The district office is compiling data on attendance, student achievement, costs, and surveys of parents/students/faculty.

Benefits—Teachers reported a new and higher level of "esprit de corp" as evidenced in a survey where 88 percent of the staff stated teacher morale had improved. In addition, 97 percent of the faculty serve on committees related to YRE, and teacher absenteeism decreased by 9 percent while the district's increased by 9 percent.

A survey of parents indicated that 80 percent of parents felt that their children achieved at least as well on a year round calendar as they did on the traditional one, and 69 percent of the teachers agreed. It is also significant to note that 65 percent of the parents strongly or tend to agree that their child had a higher level of academic achievement as a result of being on a year round calendar.

Use of Evaluation—In addition to the district office communicating results to parents, school sites, and community members, the principal of Palmcroft Elementary is very active in assisting schools and districts nationwide in the exploration and planning of a year round calendar based on his experiences and research.

Impact on Other Schools—A second elementary school in the district (Price Elementary located on the Yuma Proving Ground) adopted a single track 45-15 year round calendar in 1992-93. In 1993-94, four elementary schools (Otondo, Gwyneth Ham, Roosevelt, and Post), along with Fourth Avenue Junior High, made the transition to a single track 45-15 year round calendar. In 1994-95, C.W. McGraw Elementary and Woodard Junior High brought the number of schools on a single track 45-15 year round calendar to nine. Prior to making the transition to a new calendar, each school was required to have approximately 70 percent parent/community support before doing so. All schools offer fall and spring intersessions, with costs being derived from Chapter 1, migrant funds, and K-3 overrides.

Contact—Mr. Jon Daugherty, Principal, Palmcroft Elementary School

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